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Roman Prostitution: Senior Research Prospective

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Roman Prostitution: Senior Research Prospectus
By Allison Cartmell

I propose a yearlong study focusing on Rome's *famosae*, or "notorious women," upper class matrons who often appear in Roman literature acting as prostitutes. I would like to break my research into two general sections. In the first, I intend to look at the notorious women of literature, examining their roles and characteristics. I will attempt to reconstruct any evidence for historical women who may have acted with the freedom the elegiac *puella* or the *famosae* of satire and invective display (Marilyn B. Skinner's article, *Clodia Metelli*, will serve as a jumping off point for this undertaking). I am theorizing that the historical *famosae* are truly upper class women who exercise a certain degree of control in their public lives and in the public lives of their families. I hope to use both literary and archaeological evidence to show the freedoms these women enjoyed. In the second section I will discuss the increasing freedoms women exercised under the late republic and early principate, using archaeological and literary evidence. Then I will examine the fear that this liberation caused in the male population, which could prove to be the source of the literary *famosae*.